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ABSTRACT

This paper offers an outline for developing a program for designing and constructing a child care facility. The importance of the administrator's communication of specific plans to the architect in order to save time and money is emphasized. It is suggested that local child care licensing agencies be contacted for information about zoning regulations before the plan is developed. Sections of the outline concern: (1) community and site plans; (2) general functions and needs of the facility; (3) the statement of the facility's educational philosophy; (4) criteria for establishing square footage; (5) general building considerations; (6) staffing patterns; (7) the relationship of spaces to each other; (8) detailed description of each space; (9) a list of furnishings; (10) playgrounds and other outdoor spaces; and (11) estimated opening costs. Details and examples are provided. It is recommended that the building plans be checked closely before one goes to a builder. A bibliography of six references is appended. (GLR)

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Outline for Writing a Program for Construction of a Child Care Facility

With the proliferation of child care throughout the nation, more and more facilities are being constructed daily. One of the first steps in planning a new center is to develop the building program. Careful and tedious planning at this early stage will eliminate or alleviate many of the inevitable problems that will appear at later times in the process. Administrators who know what they want and are able to communicate those wishes to the architect early will save a great deal of time, frustration and money in the long run. Following is a rather complete outline to assist childcare administrators in developing this document. Specific situations may require alteration or elimination of any section. Local childcare licensing agencies can supply any special safety or zoning regulations. They should be contacted first. For help in completing the sections below, a selected bibliography is included.

I. Introduction

Include in this statement a general project description, purpose, and history, if appropriate, socio-economic level and the perceived needs for childcare in the proposed attendance area.

II. Community and Site Plan

Maps or descriptions of the site and surrounding areas help establish the exact location on the property as well as the suggested architectural style of the building.

III. **General Functions and Needs (Short and basic description)**

Numbers, types and ages of children to be served, hours of operation

Functions of the Center

Services for children (infants, toddlers, preschool, kindergarten, primary, handicapped, tutoring)

Services for adults (training, research, observation, parent involvement, community)

Special needs (food preparation, storage, special cleaning or maintenance)

IV. **Educational Philosophy Statement (The architecture should be supportive of the philosophical goals)**

Philosophy Statement

Broad Goals and Objectives

Instructional Methods to Achieve Goals

V. **Criteria for Establishing Square Footage**

Net square feet (NSF) is the usable space, not including hallways, toilets, mechanical, or built in cabinetry. Gross square feet (GSF) is the total space, including all outside walls.

Below are typical spaces used in a variety of facilities. Any particular plan will incorporate only those needed in a specific center. In establishing the size of classrooms, most states require from 20-35 net square feet (NSF) of classroom usable space for each child, but the recommended size is 40-50 square feet. NAEYC accreditation calls for a minimum of 35 NSF per child. If 35 square feet is used as the beginning plan, it is very likely that a center will end up with less than that. To establish the NSF per classroom, multiply the NSF per child by the

number of children in each classroom. The recommended group sizes range from 6-8 infants to 20-24 six to eight year olds. The number and size of other spaces will depend upon the number of children and the amount of usage. Some spaces, for example, would be used mainly in university research and training situations.

Types of Space (main building)

List the NSF for each space below:

Classrooms, preschool (number)

Infant spaces

Toddler

Multipurpose rooms

Administrative office(s)

Secretarial

Reception area

Conference room

Library/Resource room for teachers-parents

Teacher workroom

Teacher lounge

Isolation area for sick children

Kitchen

Kitchenette for children's use

Washer-Dryer

Toilets (at least 1 per 15 children)

Maintenance closet (with drain and water)

Storage (there's never enough)

Mechanical room

Types of Space

Covered patio

Porte Cochere (covered drive through entrance)

Other

For University centers, we may add:

Research and testing rooms with one-way glass

Observation rooms

Offices for visiting researchers

University classroom(s) for training adult students

Offices for university instructors

Additional secretarial space

Total Net Square Feet Indoors

Add totals for all spaces combined to get the NSF needed.

Total Gross Square Feet (GSF)

Multiply the NSF by 1.3 as a general rule, to get the GSF

Types of Space (outdoors)

Playground(s)

Preschool

Two year olds

Infant/Toddler

Most states require a minimum of 75 square feet per child for playground space, but the recommended space is 200 square feet per child.

Parking and Driveways, Other Zoning Requirements

Local zoning regulations will establish amount of space needed for driveways, sewers, or other setback requirements.

Total Outdoor Space Needed

Minimum Total Size of Property Needed

Total the GSF of the building and your outdoor spaces

VI. **General Building Considerations**

Dropoff and pickup area for children

Driveway(s), parking

Acoustics

Health

Safety (corners, surfaces, heights, doors, fences)

Supervision of children (teachers need to see children at all times)

Indoor-outdoor compatibility

Handicapped access

Built in and movable furniture compatibility (wheels on cabinets and adjustible/furniture heights)

Telephones and other communications systems

Security (gates, locks, alarms)

Display areas

Energy efficiency

Landscaping

Maintenance truck access (to kitchen, playground, garbage)

Accessibility and circulation

Economy

Flexibility

Possible future expansion needs

Playground (fencing, gates, surfaces, contour of land)

VII. **Staffing Patterns**

Staff and Number Needed

Administrator(s)/Secretarial

Teachers/Assistants (part time and full time)

Nurse

Kitchen Staff

Maintenance/cleaning

Other

VIII. Relationship of Spaces to Each Other

Draw a bubble diagram. This diagram consists of a series of circles or bubbles with a separate bubble for each room. These bubbles show the general relationships of each space to all others. Educators know how they will use the building, where they want the office, classrooms, and other spaces. This is an important part of the communication to the architect, who is an artist, not an educator.

IX. Detailed Description of Each Space

Take each room or space one at a time and describe or list as detailed as possible what is to be built in the construction. If several classrooms are identical, then one specific description will suffice for all of them. this is a very important and time consuming task. But the more specific the instructions given to the architect, the fewer the problems that will incur later.

Each description can follow this general format:

Use

Occupancy

Programmed net area (NSF)

Location/relationship to surrounding spaces

Architectural features and finishes

ceiling

walls

floors and covering (carpet, tile, area rugs)

windows (height and size)

doors (height of handles, weight, security)

Mechanical/Electrical Plumbing

water needs (hot, cold, sink, fountains)

toilets (supervision windows)

electrical

types of lighting, fans

outlets (height, locations, number)

telephone or intercom, if needed

Fixed Equipment

Built in counters or windowseats (heights, depths)

Cabinetry (open and closed shelving, heights)

Writing and display surfaces (magnetic, chalk, tack board)

Storage

X. List of Furnishings (Room by Room, same spaces as Section IX)

Classrooms which duplicate materials can be listed once with the items totalled. This total will be used for ordering equipment and supplies.

Items:

Furnishings (furniture, office equipment, machines)

Educational equipment and supplies, including audio visual

Expendable materials

XI. Playground and Other Outdoor Spaces

Built in equipment (trike path, play equipment, gardens, fence, other)

Loose parts play equipment (balls, wheel toys, tools)

Landscaping

Parking and driveway(s)

XII. **Estimated Costs (only for opening, not for operation)**

This section, of course, controls the entire facility. Include these items in the cost:

Land

Construction (GSF of building times the average square foot costs in the local community)

Landscaping, parking and playground

Architect Fees (from 5-8% of construction costs)

Surveys

Zoning fee and impact costs

Licensing and inspection fees

Furnishings, office

Educational furnishings and equipment for children

Expendable supplies

Contingencies (for extra surveys, higher bids, inflation, changes in plans during construction)

Total Estimated Costs (add all items)

When the program is completed, choose an architect who can work in harmony with you. It is important, particularly in the early stages, to be certain that your ideas are incorporated into the plan. However, give the architect freedom to use his own artistic and creative skills as well.

The building plans should be checked very closely before they go to a builder. It is difficult and expensive to make changes once

construction bids have been accepted and construction is underway. Designing and building a new school can be both fascinating and frustrating. Good luck. You are off on an exciting adventure.

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